May 16,1966

MEMO TO DAVID WELSH

RE: J.J. UNDERHILL

The attached memos and letters speak for themselves and do not show any positive connection between Underhill and the CIA or Underhill and Kennedy's death. His own death is mysterious, but there is no evidence that could connect his death with the fears he exhibited when he visited the Fitzsimmons after Kennedy was killed.

On your suggestion I decided to visit New Jersey and Mrs. Fitzsimmons to see whether the comment in her husband's letter to Donovan("He spelled all this out in great detail to Charlie.") meant that the Fitzsimmons knew more than Donovan suggested to both of us in his seemingly guarded phone calls.

I called Mrs. Fitzsimmons to arrange a meeting for Wednesday, May 15, which was yesterday. It turns out that Charlene is Charlie, and it was with her that Underhill had this conversation. She claims that she was packing for a trip to Spain and that her husband was upstairs asleep. She had met Underhill once before, and she told me that since her husband had given instructions not to be disturbed, she did not awaken him, but tried to get Underhill to leave, since it was late at night. As far as the "great detail" statement is concerned, she said that he rambled on for about an hour and a half, but that everything she remembers was stated in the letter; that if he gave names she does not remember them,and does not think he gave her any. She was quite open on the phone with me and said that she had been stunned by Underhill's statement because she only had suffered the assassination the day before and was willing to believe anything.

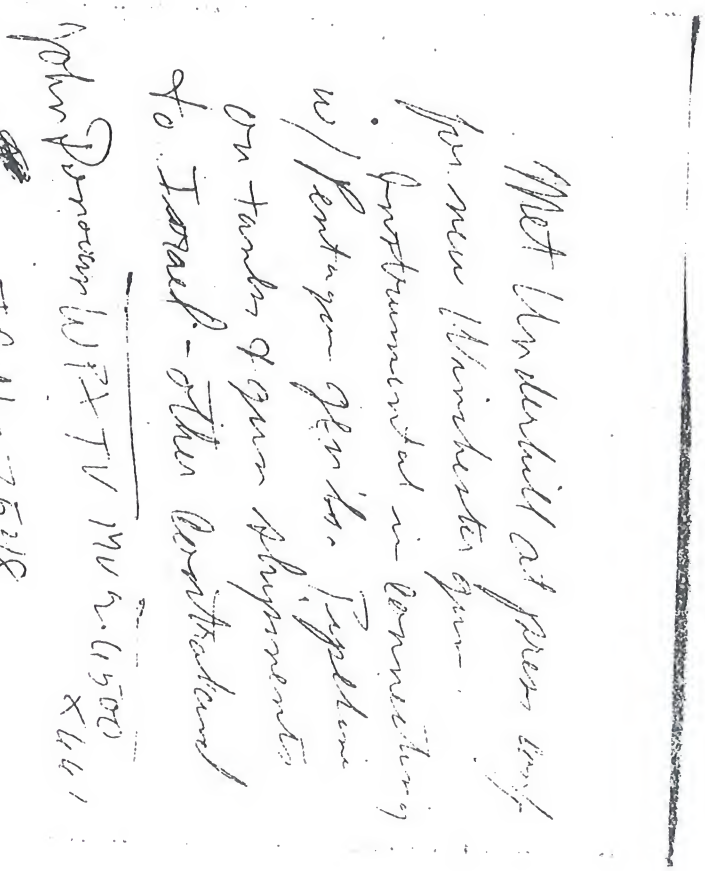
What I'm driving at here is that both Donovan and Charlie Fitzsimmons told me the same thing on the phone, only Donovan acted as though it was a state secret he was talking about and could only divulge a few details. Charlie was entirely open on the same subject, with no guile or pretense,yet their stories were the same. And since the story he was telling was really her story, I have no reason to doubt her word that she knows absolutely nothing else. For this reason I concluded that if there is truth to Underhill's purported statements at the time the facts will have to be found somewhere else besides Tom's River, N.J. and I did not make the trip.

What puts this in better perspective, but does not answer the mystery of Underhill's death, are the comments of Asher Brynes, former contributing editor at the New Republic and Paul Ogle of Falcon Aeronautics, both friends of Underhill who believe that he was not well during his last year or two, that he was under psychiatric treatment and various strains, including money and wife troubles. It could be that both men are lying, but why should they? Donovan suggests Falcon Aeronautics might be a CIA front. Perhaps it is, but that does not mean that Donovan would get a deliberate lie from Paul Ogle if the same information in his letter could be confirmed elsewhere; i.e., Asher Brynes. Donovan mysteriously states that Ogle invited him to write further, which he did, submitting a long list of questions about the CIA and Kennedy's death. He is suspicious because he did not ever get an answer from Ogle. Maybe they were stupid questions. Maybe Ogle thinks Donovan is a nut. Maybe Ogle is inefficient and has a lousy secretary. My point is that what Donovan sees as suspicious evidence

that he feeds you and I may be nothing more than speculation over coincidence.

As for Underhill's death, noone should be happy about the police report and I will continue to work to get that, as I have some friends in town who have indirect access to them and have promised to try.

I still do not know the name of the medical student who supposedly was with Brynes. Jones Harris, who claims to have all sorts of inside information, said he did not know the fellow's name when I spoke with him. I think Harris does know, but is playing hard to get.

What it boils down to is that it has not panned out. Underhill told a provocative story about the CIA's operations in the Far East. A girl I know has even told me, as of about a year ago, how the CIA was trying to knock out Prince Sinouiak(sp?) of Cambodia. She is in the Far East desk. But Ramparts will need more than the Underhill-Fitzsimmons conversation to make a go of it.

On the following page are some notes on my talk with Brynes, the New Republic contributing editor.